

**“It’s What
We Do!”**

**131st Fighter Wing
Missouri Air National Guard**

**No. 6
Nov/Dec 2003**

Holiday Hazards



***Watering your Christmas tree will help keep it from becoming a potential fire hazard.**

***Extension cords pose tripping hazard. Too many extension cords can also be electric risk.**

***It important to use proper safety equipment when hanging decorations.**

***Decreasing temperatures can be very dangerous if you are not dressed properly. Remember to bundle up. Dress in layers to avoid heat exhaustion.**

***Winter weather can create numerous risks while driving. Be prepared for the worst!**

***Drinking might be acceptable if done in moderation, but drinking and driving is never tolerated.**

Holiday Safety

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131st Fighter Wing Commander

Col. Robert L. Leeker

131st Fighter Wing Vice Commander

Tenant Units**Col. Lawrence Smith Jr.**

231st Civil Engineering Flight Commander

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ORE just around corner

By **Col. Michael Brandt**
131st Fighter Wing Commander

I hope that you are enjoying the holiday season. Please let me be the first to wish you an “Outstanding” 2004.

2004 will be busy for us. If you’re not already tired of hearing it, another Operation Readiness Exercise is upon us. I know that it seems like we just left Gulfport, but this work and tempo will pay off, I assure you.

When we return, there are only a few short months—a couple of drills—to get everything in place for the “big show.”

The base relocation is still an open issue. We will continue to make every effort to get the base that this Wing deserves. Regardless of the outcome, we will continue to do “what we do.”

In late 2004, we will start accepting the F-15 C models from the active duty Air Force. We

will be the first Air National Guard unit to receive these aircraft, which is a very positive sign of our future.

Finally, recruiting and retention are

everyone’s business. Let’s make sure that we welcome new members with meaningful and rewarding assignments and mentors. Let’s also take full advantage of their volunteer spirit and patriotism.

You have always heard me say that we need to meet the tasking, do it safely and get outstanding on inspections. Please add to that 100% manning. It is imperative that we get and keep the

members and their families.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. This is a great country and you play a significant role in “what we do.” Be proud of that fact. I will see you in Gulfport!

*Photo by SSgt. Cathy Lirette***Col. Michael Brandt**

By **Col. Robert L. Leeker**
131st Fighter Wing Vice Commander

The Operational Readiness Exercises (ORE) are a key element of the Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI) preparation process. The ORI Planning Team has been diligently working to address lessons learned from our recent exercise and in nearly constant contact with IG and Gulfport staff to ensure a smooth deployment and inspection process. In January, the results of this planning will be evident.

Some of the major changes members should expect to see are as follows:

- Upon arrival at Base X, members will in-process at the Reception Control Center before receiving room keys.
- There will be a transition day on which the unit will perform the required ORI stand-alone exercises. This is also an opportunity to finish setting up work centers and offer last-minute refresher training, if needed.
- The Personnel Processing Area has been relocated to the dining facility.
- Personal communication devices (pagers, cell phones etc.) will not be authorized in

the play area.

-Clubs (both on- and off-base) and casinos are off limits for ORE participants until the war is over.

Although planning teams members expect that January’s inspection will show a marked improvement over September, the team will be back at work after the ORE, addressing weak areas, perfecting processes, and ensuring that everyone understands their ORI role before April.

That the 131st Fighter Wing is tasked with the same demands as their active duty counterparts, with significantly fewer man-hours and resources to meet them, is a challenge. That it will accomplish this in a relatively short timeframe illustrates the unit’s readiness and capability, even before the IG report is written.

This inspection is simply one of the many challenges that the 131st Fighter Wing must face. The Wing is already looking forward to receiving F-15C aircraft, a projected base relocation and future inspections, and it is dependent on its members for achieving success.

Holiday season brings new meaning to chaplain

By Lt. Col. Michael T. Butler
131st Fighter Wing Chaplain

It was a cool autumn evening in November of 1983. I was a seminary student waiting to head home for the Thanksgiving holiday.

The building was already all but deserted as I waited for my ride that would take me home. To pass the time away, I began to linger over the hallway bulletin board catching up on all the news that I had neglected over the past few days of exams. Suddenly, one of my professors, a priest, broke the tranquil silence as he was passing down the hall.

"Are you going home for the holidays?" he asked, as he paused for a moment.

"Yes, Father," I replied. "My ride should be here any moment."

"Well, although you don't deserve it," he said, "may you have a wonderful Thanksgiving with your family," and he continued on his way.

Had my ears deceived me? I don't deserve it? What did he mean by that? I don't deserve it! How could he say such a thing?

I was a hard working student and did well in school. I served as the president of

my class, volunteered often to work with the poor and labored to teach a religion class at a grade school each week. I gave of myself to others. How could he say that I don't deserve it! To say the least, his comment really "frosted my cookie!"

Over the next few hours, no matter how I tried to let his unnerving comment go, it kept replaying itself over and over again in my head. Did I deserve it?

Later that evening, as I brought that brief but provoking encounter with my professor to prayer, I really began to wonder. I began to create a mental list of all the blessings and good things that I had received in my life.

Did I earn the right to be born at this exciting time in history, into a wonderful family in this blessed nation? Did I earn good health and the opportunity to go to school? Had I done something in my life to receive a reward of being surrounded by so many wonderful, friendly, caring people?

No, I had not. I had not done anything to deserve any of it. The priest was right: I "don't deserve it." So why, I asked myself, did I continue to live life as if I deserved everything that I have, when in fact the

best things that I have were given to me as gift?

I realized that, undeserving as I may be, God has chosen to give me a wonderful, beautiful life just the same. The seemingly abrasive remark of the priest that autumn night encouraged me to really consider all that I had been given.

Thanksgiving that year turned out to be the best Thanksgiving I ever had. Thanksgiving, and indeed the entire holiday season, is a yearly opportunity for us to give thanks for the gifts and blessing that we have received. Gifts and blessings are not earned or deserved. They are freely given out of love. "Thanksgiving" is our grateful response to that love.

As we celebrate this holiday season, may our hearts and lives overflow with gratitude. May we take some time to really consider everything good that we have been given: perhaps our health, our families, our jobs, our gifts and talents, the people that God has placed into our lives.

The fact of the matter is: we deserve nothing in this life, yet God continues to give. Although we "don't deserve it," may we all have a wonderful holiday season!

Promotions

Lt Col:

James M. McComas 131 OSF
Scott M. Quinlan 157 AOG

Major:

Lauri A. Moore HQ NGMO
Sean M. Nolan 110 WF

2nd Lt:

Sean D. Cantwell 110 FS

Chief Master Sgt:

Kimberly J. Lambert-head 131 CF
Jeffrey D. Mehlhaff 218 EIS
Harry A. Nelson 131 SVF
James E. Pieper 231 CEF
Lisa D. Kessinger 131 LRS
Senior Master Sgt:
Christopher G. Orf 231 CEF

Gerald V. Parrish Jr. 218 EIS
Albert K. Schulte 131 CF
John A. Youngstrom 131 MSF

Master Sgt:

Brian E. Fleming 157 AOG
David S. Hentges 218 EIS
Lawrence L. Layton 131 SFS
Janice F. Riley HQ NGMO

Tech. Sgt:

James D. Bradley 131 MXS
Christopher Gossage 131 MSF
Candace D. Jeffery 131 MSF
Cheryl L. Pierce 571 AFB
Maccabee Rauhaus 239 CBCS
Brian S. Schwartz 218 EIS
Gregory G. Scott 131 CES
Clifton R. Swyers 131 CES

Jeffery Vossenkemper 239 CBCS

Staff Sgt:

Michelle M. Collins 157 AOG
Matthew C. Giles 131 CES
Aasim I Inshirah 239 CBCS
Levi R. Johnson 218 EIS
Timothy J. Loyd 239 CBCS
Russell H. Riis, 239 CBCS
Robert A. Risky 157 AOG
Akinyela S. Taylor 157 AOG

Senior Airman:

Daniel R. Conley 131 MXS
Michael A. Crnko 239 CBCS
James E. Eggers 131 CF
Jonathan T. Haynes 131 AMS
Tabitha D. Jones 239 CBS

Paul W. Kelley IV 131 LRS

Jason J. McCall 131 AMS
Donald E. Moore Jr. 110 WF
Thomas J. Seper II 218 EIS
Rain Sims 131 LRS
Terry C. Storch 131 MXS
Airman 1st Class:
Vernie E. Barbee 218 EIS
David L. Claxton 131 CES
Shawn M. Conroy 239 CBCS
David M. Hays 131 MXS
Timothy R. T. Hodges 131 SFS
James T. Laska 131 CES
Larrin S. Lewis 157 AOG
Thomas W. Major 131 MDS
Daivid G. Mauzy 131 SFS
Jedediah M. Wilson 131 CES

Awards and Decorations

Meritorious Service Medal

Chief Master Sgt. John L. Warner 131 CF
Master Sgt. Kenneth R. Tyler 131 AMS
Master Sgt. Anita Zambruski 131 CF

Career Development Course

Congratulations to Senior Master Sgt. John Youngstrom of the 131 MSF for scoring 91 percent in the Personnel Journeymen Course.

Winter weather: threat to holiday drivers

By Tech Sgt. Kevin Cashion
131 Fighter Wing safety office

The holiday season is upon us. The holidays are a great time to give thanks, appreciate family and friends and to reflect on the past and upcoming New Year.

As joyous as the season is, it is important to practice mishap prevention.

One area of concern is holiday travel. Many people will "hit the road" to be with their family and friends in other locations. Traffic accidents increase dramatically during this time. Fortunately there are several ways to avoid these types of accidents.

Keep all automobiles car in good working order. The holidays are the worst possible time for automobiles to break down on the highway. Before leaving, have a qualified mechanic inspect the automobile's brakes, battery, fluid levels, tire pressure, light bulbs and any parts that need regular maintenance.

Carry emergency equipment. Bring a first-aid kit, flashlight,

blankets, drinking water, and snacks, flares and jumper cables. If driving in snowy conditions, the kit should also include cat litter for traction in case the automobile gets stuck, an ice scraper and tire chains. Practice putting chains on your tires in advance. A cell phone is also useful in emergencies.

Double-check the route. It's important to know how to get where you're going. Plot the route on a map and remember to take the map with you. Check in advance to see if there are any road closings or local weather conditions that might alter the course. Consult the National Weather Service Web site for accurate weather updates.

Allow plenty of time to get to the destination. The busiest travel days are those right before and after Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's. Try to take an extra day off to allow sufficient driving time; it could

save you from the stress of sitting in a traffic jam, or worse, falling asleep at the wheel.

Once on the road, drive carefully. Don't drive recklessly, even if late to the family dinner or a glamorous party.

Practice safe, defensive driving and don't drive after drinking. Nightfall during the holidays always brings out intoxicated drivers, so it's wise to stay off the road at this

time.

Curb road rage. Add inclement weather to preoccupied drivers at this busy time of year and you get stressful road conditions. Be a courteous driver to help avoid aggression from other drivers. Don't make lane changes without signaling and avoid cutting off other vehicles.

If you do make a move that angers another driver, simply wave an apology and don't engage further in any argu-

ments.

Forgive other drivers' mistakes. But above all, don't let a minor nuisance escalate into an unpleasant confrontation that dampens your good mood or, worse, becomes dangerous.

Don't leave valuables in the automobile. Whenever possible, avoid leaving holiday purchases, suitcases or other valuable items in the automobile; always try to bring them along. When this is impossible, at least be sure to secure possessions in a locked trunk.

Keep an eye on the prize. Remember what the reason for starting the trip was. Let's not make it a trip to the hospital instead of the original plans.

Wear a seat belt and secure children in an approved child safety seat.

By remembering the above guidelines, holiday travelers can make this a good holiday memory instead of one they would like to forget.

Remember, it only takes a second to forget one of the above steps but a lifetime to live with the consequences.



Air National Guard Band of the Central States

Upcoming events:

Dec. 7 - Brass Quintet
at Mo. Historical
Society
Dec. 7 Sidewinder at
the USO Military
Appreciation Day at
Lambert International
Airport
Dec. 13 & 14 - Winter
Concert at Chesterfield
YMCA



Photo by Staff Sgt. Cathy Lirette

The beary best books

In a joint partnership with the Build-A-Bear Workshop, the Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary brought 45 new childrens books to the Scooby's Den on Dec. 6. Jackie Jones and Nancy Hooper, presidents of the Ladies Auxiliaries, presented each child with two books for them to take home.